

REMARKS

Independent claim 1 is amended to incorporate therein the limitations of dependent claim 2. Consequently, claim 2 is canceled. Claim 1 is also amended to correct the informality noted by the Examiner.

Independent claim 8 is amended to incorporate a limitation that the protective shield is to include a refractory-lined portion.

The Examiner indicated that claim 2 is allowable if rewritten in independent form to include all the limitations of the base claim and intervening claims. Claim 2 is dependent directly from claim 1 and, thus, the incorporation of the limitations of claim 2 into claim 1 should place it in allowable form. Claims 3-7 are dependent either directly or indirectly from claim 1 and, thus, should also be allowable.

Independent claim 8 is directed to a method of protecting a feed nozzle by use of a protective shield similar to that of claim 1. The amendment to claim 8 provides a limitation that requires the protective shield to include a refractory-lined portion similar to the limitation of claim 2. It is respectfully submitted that the amendment of claim 8 places it in allowable form and that dependent claim 9 is, therefore, also allowable.

In view of the above amendments, the 35 USC §102 and 35 USC §103 rejections are believed to now be moot.

It is respectfully submitted that claim 1 and 3-9, as they are now amended, are allowable. Early allowance thereof is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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